

New Head Disputes Charges

Bar Association Criticized by Nader

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By Cathe Wolhowe
Washington Post Staff Writer

Ralph Nader yesterday called the American Bar Association "a trade association" controlled by a few powerful corporate attorneys who further goals of their wealthy clients rather than the legal profession.

Some of the chairmen cited by Nader as having corporate conflicts are:

- Evans Brasfield of Richmond, chairman of the Environmental Controls Committee, who represents General Motors, oil companies and major utility companies.

- James T. Hemphill of Pittsburgh, chairman of the Coal Committee, represents Consolidation Coal Company.

- Charles Wheeler of New York City, chairman of the Oil Committee, represents Cities Service, with a vice chairman, Richard Ryan of Houston, who represents oil companies.

- Norman J. Weiner of Portland, Ore., chairman of the Forest Resources Committee, represents Georgia-Pacific, Gilchrist Timber and Moore Oregon Lumber, with a vice chairman, Charles M. Duecy of Scottsdale, Ariz., who represents U.S. Plywood.

"It is no accident that these men control the ABA bastion of political power which has moved only by following others and only in areas where corporate interests are not affected," Nader said.

Nader made his comments at a conference called by him to evaluate the performance of the organized bar. The ABA is holding its annual convention at the same time here.

The new ABA president, Chesterfield Smith of Lakeland, Fla., took issue with Nader's analysis, saying, "I have tried hard to name chairmen from all sections of the country representing all parts of the legal profession. We



RALPH NADER
... sees conflicts

for anything you might call the conscience of the bar."

MacKenzie urged the lawyers present at the Nader conference to organize "as they did against the nomination of G. Harrold Carswell to the Supreme Court" because they "may find that they have a larger constituency than the officially organized bar."

Because of the high fees charged by lawyers, CBS correspondent Fred Graham thinks the public would welcome opposition to the organized bar. He noted the median net income for lawyers last year was \$41,700 per year in large cities and \$32,400 in towns with populations under 250,000.

"There's nothing venal about this, but the lawyer uses his union to maintain a monopoly of the business," he said.

But lawyers have much more than a monopoly, Jethro K. Lieberman of Business Week asserted, because "all social activity entails rules and in our society lawyers are the keepers of the rules."

Monroe Freedman, director of the Stern Community Law Firm, said the only way many Americans will receive legal

assistance is if public interest attorneys are allowed by the ABA to solicit clients.

Under existing ABA rules, solicitation is prohibited, but Freedman notes this provision does not hinder many attorneys in private practice because it does not apply to close friends, relatives or former clients.

don't have enough women, blacks or Chicanos, but we're trying."

Although chairmen cannot speak for the ABA without action by the ABA House of Delegates, Jonathan Adler, a private Los Angeles attorney and director of the California Center on Environmental Impact, says it too is not representative of the legal profession, but "a tight ship run by the leadership."

"Most of its members are not subject to direct election, votes are not recorded and members are almost exclusively male, white and over 40, and mostly from larger private firms," Adler said.

Smith, however, feels the ABA would welcome diverse views and urged Nader to present his criticisms to the organized bar.

"I can't promise his views will prevail among the more than 170,000 members, but the only way to obtain change is to work within the existing structure," Smith said.

Other criticisms of the ABA included that of John P. MacKenzie, a staff writer for The Washington Post, who said "The ABA simply lacks the institutional capacity to speak